

The Kalifornski

A publication of the
Slavic American Cultural Organization



September-December
2018
Vol. #13



To inform and educate Slavic
Americans, as well as others, of the
Slavic Culture and History

President's Message

Dear SACO Members,

Well, our summer is almost over and fall is in the air with the nights getting longer. We have been very busy this summer. The SAEP committee was organizing the trip to Croatia for the seven students who were fortunate to participate in the program. They left on June 19th and returned July 5th just in time for the July 8th barbeque. They had smiles on their faces both leaving for Croatia and Montenegro and arriving home with lots of stories to tell their families and friends. The City of Dubrovnik hosted several events and meals for these students and their chaperones. The Zaninovich family hosted a dinner on the Island of Hvar. In Konavle, Martin and Anita Lasich as well as John, Jelka, and Luci Basor also opened their homes for lunch and a picnic. They were grateful for the opportunity to see various historical landmarks, towns, villages and most importantly their family ancestry. They gathered again as a group to the picnic which was attended by over 400 people. What a great time everyone had. I heard nothing but compliments for the great food.

I want to explain what the SAEP Committee does. We are a separate committee, under the umbrella of SACO to select students who qualify to send to Croatia. We have been raising funds for the last 3 years and have been very successful through the very kind and generous contributions of each of you along with various businesses in our area who have donated to this first trip. We have had 3 February dinners and 2 October barbeques. Any funds raised at these events goes towards the "Student Ambassador" trips. Any SACO money from events or donations stays with the SACO organization and is used for further events and most importantly for our high school senior scholarship program of which has been very successful this year.

Next year students from Croatia are scheduled to arrive to Watsonville. The City of Dubrovnik will be financially responsible for their trip. SAEP and committee members are responsible for hosting them with some meals and various field trips throughout their stay in the United States.

I am very pleased to announce that the Watsonville City Council has issued a proclamation to accept Cavtat in the Konavle region of Croatia to become a "Sister City" with Watsonville.

please read the recent article in our local Register-Pajaronian newspaper at:

<https://register-pajaronian.com/article/watsonville-forms-ties-with-croatian-city>

Please keep in mind that 2019 will be the 40th anniversary of SACO. I encourage you to call me with any ideas you may have to make this anniversary memorable.

I hope to see everyone at our SAEP barbeque on October 7th and our December Christmas event. Please call me with any questions, concerns or ideas you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda K. Pavlovich

(831) 595-5898 Cell or (831) 722-2481 Home

Calendar of Events

SACO/SAEP BBQ
October 7, 2018 at 12:00 pm
Pajaro Valley Historical
Association
332 East Beach Street
Watsonville, CA

SACO Christmas Dinner
December 8, 2018 at 4:00 pm
Watsonville Women's Club
12 Brennan Street
Watsonville, CA
More information to follow

SACO Annual Membership
Meeting, January 26, 2019 at
11:00 am
Knights of Columbus Hall
230 East Lake Avenue
Watsonville, CA
*(more information in this
newsletter)*

SAEP Fourth Annual
Fundraising Dinner
February 23, 2019, 5:30 pm
Watsonville Civic Plaza
Community Room, 4th Floor
275 Main St., Watsonville, CA

SACO Lamb Dinner
April or May, 2019
More information to follow

July Picnic
July 7, 2019, 12:00 pm
Corralitos Community
Center/Padres Hall
33 Browns Valley Road
Corralitos, CA

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Treasurer's Report

Prepared by: Susan Radin Gallagher

The July 8th barbecue netted \$8,723.20

The checking account balance, as of August 31, 2018, was \$23,492.80

The Scholarship Account balance, as of August 31, 2018, was \$2,882.00
with (3) three \$800.00 scholarships to still be dispersed.

SACO has 207 memberships in 2018



In Memory Of



Sharon Alaga

Bea Drobac

Nick Alaga

Mary Lipanovich

Arne Thirup

Anthony "Tony" Bobeda

Clara Radin

Ann Lucich Johann

Let us remember those that SACO has recently lost but will never be forgotten

RECOGNITIONS

SACO/SAEP Board member Marc Dei Piero was honored by the Monterey History and Art Association (MHAA) when he was awarded their highest honor, the Laura Bride Powers Award. MHAA is the largest and oldest non-profit on the Monterey Bay committed to the preservation of our historic legacies. The award, which was presented in Monterey, is conferred upon individuals who are recognized for their extraordinary and sustained efforts and contributions to the preservation and protection of the historic sites, cultural resources, and artistic legacies of California's Central Coast."

Advanced Sommelier Paul Mekis Wins Wine Spectator's International "Grand Award"

Paul Mekis is the Director of Wine for Rosewood Resorts. He oversees and consults with the wine programs of the expanding Rosewood Hotels throughout the world. Paul selects all the wines for the wine list at Madera, the Michelin starred restaurant tucked into the upscale Rosewood Sand Hill resort in Menlo Park. He is proud of the rare wine collection he has created for his cellar since its opening in 2009.

In July, Wine Spectator announced its 2018 honorees. Paul's cellar at Madera was one of only 7 recognized internationally with the Grand Award. This is the Oscar of the wine industry. Paul received it on October 20th at a black tie ceremony in New York. It is the second restaurant for which Paul has received the "Grand Award" recognition, and this time, he has been asked to speak at the gala. He says of his cellar "I feel that the list is the best I've ever done, and I'm very proud of it. I put my heart and soul in it."

Paul, with his wife Julie (from France, prominent in the wine industry herself) and youngest son Henry joined fellow SACO members at our barbecue in July. That day, their oldest son, eagle scout Dalton Mekis, was one of the proud scholarship recipients recognized at our Corralitos gathering. Paul's daughter Dominique, who had been a SACO scholarship recipient in 2016, was there to cheer on her brother as well. Although both Paul and Julie's careers are centered in the greater bay area, where Paul began his career as a sommelier in 1986, home and family are in Santa Cruz.

Paul is the grandson of Marko Mekis (Poljice) and Kate Korach Mekis (Gruda). He is the son of Andy and Audrey Mekis. He credits his early interest in wine to a boyhood joining his dad making the same wines our grandfathers had made for generations before him.

Raise a glass to the Wine Master. Zivjio Paul!



ANNUAL JULY PICNIC - SUMMER BBQ

Sunday, July 8, 2018 at the Corralitos Padres Hall



Photo Credits
to:
Mary
Gospodnetich
and
Mike Hodges



SACO HONORS SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS

On July 8, the Slavic American Cultural Organization held its annual summer picnic at the Corralitos Community Center/ Padres Hall welcoming 400 guests. The Club's ten scholarship recipients were announced, each receiving an \$800 award

Thank you.

Maryann Bulich Schnitter
(408) 828-5206

TOP ROW: Jonathan Halstead (Aptos, Univ. of San Francisco), Dalton Mekis (Santa Cruz, UC Santa Cruz), Meghan Clifton (St. Francis, Fresno State Univ.), Lindsay Cagnacci (St. Francis, Arizona State Univ.)

FRONT ROW: Ava Totah (Aptos, Loyola Marymount Univ.), Ciella Zivanovich (St. Francis, Chico State Univ.), Kirsten Cranford (St. Francis, UC Merced)

NOT PICTURED: Nikolas Gera (Aptos, Cuesta), Marie Ruso (Aptos, Cabrillo), Marea Zlatunich (Aptos, UC Berkeley)

First Students Return from the SAEP Trip to Croatia

BY TERESA DEL PIERO

My husband Eric and I were honored to be the chaperones on the first SACO/SAEP trip to Croatia this summer. We left Watsonville by van to the San Francisco airport on June 19 and arrived in Zagreb on June 20. We started a Croatia Express Tour, arranged by Adriatic Travel, with a small group of travelers, a tour guide and a bus driver. After spending our first two nights in Zagreb, we traveled to Split. Each city provided many opportunities to learn about Croatian history and culture. After Split, we traveled by ferry to the Island of Hvar. Our tour guide took us to several local vendors along the way where we found great mementos and gifts for family. From Hvar we moved on to Dubrovnik, where we met with the Mayor and his staff. The City of Dubrovnik was very generous and sponsored a number of activities for us. We had a day trip to Montenegro and a trip to Ston, before arriving at our final stop, Cavtat.

Many of our students met family members from the area while we were in Cavtat. While there, we visited Cilipi and saw the dancers, we spent the day in Mokunat and visited Sokol Grad. We returned to Dubrovnik several times and also met with the Mayor of the Konavle region and his staff. We ate good food, lamb was a favorite of the group, and we often commented about being on "Croatia time". We returned to Watsonville, July 5. I have included some comments from our seven students and we thank the SACO members for all of the generous contributions towards this trip and future ones.

Marko Zaninovich said "I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to travel and tour Croatia this summer with SACO. I was able to see my Uncle Vjeko and have dinner with the group at the family restaurant on Hvar. Good people and great memories."

Katherine Hodges said "Words cannot describe the experience I had while in Croatia. I loved learning about Croatian culture and, most importantly, connecting with my family."

Hunter Bobeda said that he "loved being in Croatia during the World Cup."

Emily Garcia said that "It was an amazing experience being able to meet my family...The trip was the best trip I have ever experienced. I didn't get homesick, and I bonded really well with the group. The trip requirements, traveling and chaperones were all excellent. I highly recommend this trip to students that are either sophomores or juniors."

Tory Whitney said "I will remember all the time I spent with all the people in our group and the conversations and exploring all the different places we went to. I will also remember walking through the Trsteno Arboretum and just exploring and seeing as much of it that I possibly could."

Mary Claire Whitney said "I think what I will remember most is spending evenings walking around the different towns with the other kids. We had so much fun becoming friends, joking and exploring the beauty of each new place."

Katelyn Bettencourt said "My favorite part of our Croatia trip was being able to travel to the different cities and experiencing the diversity of the places across the country. I also enjoyed getting the opportunity to see my old family home in Bani, which is currently being restored by a cousin living there."

Katelyn had wanted to see water polo while we were in Croatia and on our last night in Cavtat, we got to see a tournament that included a team from California. As the sun set, we enjoyed our last evening at an outdoor café sipping coffee and dreaming of when we could return to Croatia.



WATSONVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S DIGITIZATION OF THE KALIFORNISKI NEWSLETTER

A few notes about the importance of digitizing the Kalifornski for historical cultural preservation from Susan Renison, Reference Librarian, on August 24 2018. She has been working with both GeriAnne Solano Simmons and her daughter, Nikole Simmons on collecting past issues that are in the collection of the former Patricia L. Gospodnetich Solano, founding member and first President of SACO (formerly YACO) of digitizing approximately 250 newsletters (approximately 2,500 11 X 8.5 pages, double sided)

Digitizing the Kalifornski newsletter (published by the Slavic-American Cultural Organization SACO) and the Harmonija LP recording would continue local efforts to document the influence and importance of Slavic-Americans in the Pajaro Valley and United States.

While researching local Slavic history, Donna Mekis, co-author of *Blossoms into Gold*, found that "...everyone we talked to said that [in the 1920s and '30s] you heard Croatian on Main Street of Watsonville as much as you heard English."

ABOUT THE SLAVIC-AMERICAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION SACO: Created in 1979, SACO continues to unite and inspire the local Slavic-American community through events, presentations, and information. Over the years, there have been picnics, lectures, dinners, potlucks, scholarships, music and art, historical information, participation in local community events, member lists, and family history. The organization began as YACO (the Yugoslavian-American Cultural Organization) as a "play on the word 'jako' meaning strong". In 1992, with the breakup of Yugoslavia, they voted on the name change to SACO but continued with their same purpose: To preserve the culture of all the Slavic peoples of the Pajaro Valley and beyond.

ABOUT THE KALIFORNISKI: SACO's newsletter began shortly after its founding. Issue #1 advertised Yugoslavian students looking for temporary housing, an earthquake benefit for southern Yugoslavia, the definition of Slav, the recipe of the month (djuvec) and an invitation to bring together various members of the Slavic community for social and cultural enjoyment while "excluding politics and religion in any argumentative way".

From one of the founders, Patricia L. Gospodnetich Solano, in Kalifornski, #8: "We would hope to tear down the many barriers of misunderstanding that may have held us apart in the past. We will come together with a common purpose of understanding and appreciating more fully the building of our culture and its ageless traditions." And in Autumn 2004, written to commemorate the 25th anniversary: "Our organization took root for the purpose [of] gathering together to visit with old friends, to make new friends and to keep our traditions and culture alive...It was wonderful sharing stories and history with some of our elder members. We saw many young members grow with us...The majority of our members were and still are of Slavic background but we do welcome non-Slavic members too because it makes us richer for sharing our many traditions and cultures."

The Kalifornski newsletter has connected the local community with other groups in the state and nationally, including the Croatian Fraternal Union of America Northern CA, the Veseli Seljaci Tamburitizans, the Slavic-American Benevolent Society of San Jose, and the Slavonic Society of San Francisco. The newsletter also connects the "new country" with the "old country" through written articles about current affairs and history, art, visiting dignitaries and "common" people, and providing opportunities to hear visiting musicians.

The Kalifornski published traditional folk music, supporting the musical culture. It promoted the YACO community choral group Harmonija which traveled across the U.S., produced at least one record and played in local venues, as well as the Veseli Seljaci, a multi-cultural song and dance troupe which performed in the western United States at Tamburitza Extravaganzas (annual festivals of tamburiza music and kolo dancing), and made eight recordings. It also advertised the local radio program The Yugoslav Radio Hour conducted by the Soldo family whose record collection was placed in the Stanford Special Collections and University Archives in 2003.

(continued on page 6)

LOCAL HISTORICAL PRESERVATION EFFORTS

The Watsonville Public Library recently made available two historic videos in DVD format:

1. *The Yugoslavian community in Santa Cruz County*: a presentation of the 1988 exhibit at the Pajaro Valley Gallery and the Octagon Museum (displays of Yugoslav photographs and memorabilia from local families, businesses, and cultural organizations. The Santa Cruz County Historical Trust sponsored this exhibit with help from the Yugoslavian-American Cultural Organization, the Croatian Fraternal Union, the Adriatic Croatian Club and the Slavic American Benevolent Society)
2. *The Croatian community in the Pajaro Valley* (part of a 1996 Library Centennial celebration; presented at the library by Ann Matiasovich Soldo and Barney Radovich; filmed by the Video Academy of Watsonville High School; the entire celebration won Event of the Year Award from the Pajaro Valley Chamber of Commerce)

LOCAL AUTHORS

1. Thomas Ninkovich compiled and edited three volumes of *The Slav Community of Watsonville, California: As Reported in Old Newspapers 1881-1920 and 1920-1929*. Mr. Ninkovich is the archivist for the Croatian Immigration History Project.
2. Donna F. Mekis [and] Kathryn Mekis Miller wrote *Blossoms into Gold: the Croatians in the Pajaro Valley*. An overflowing crowd came to its presentation at the Mello Center, Watsonville; the Mekis sisters also had the book presented in Croatia.
3. Mike Wallace wrote *The Borina Family of Watsonville*, published by the Museum of Art & History in Santa Cruz. It tells the history of a once prominent Pajaro Valley apple-growing Croatian-American family whose philanthropy still benefits our community.

From Tom Ninkovich about his Croatian Immigration History Project: "The connection that Watsonville has with this one region of southern Croatia, called Konavle, is really amazing," Ninkovich said. "I often visit the region and the people there all know about 'Watsonville.' It's really unique and special to them." "One of the most important reasons for doing this research is really for the people back in Croatia who lost many of their photos when their homes were burned and destroyed during the recent war in the early '90s. Some of the most incredibly moving experiences I've had in my life have been when I've returned old photos found in the States to these families in Croatia. Many times the people cry when they see a photo of their grandmother or great-grandfather or other relatives when they thought they'd lost the photos forever."

Editors Note:

This "Kalifornski was the creation of Patricia L. Gospodnetich Solano, first Editor, founding member and first President of the organization. She, as well as the executive board, felt that they needed to publish a newsletter that would be used as a form of communication to members notifying them of current events, historical notes and other topics of interest. Of course, this was before the use of computers or social media so she collected submissions from everyone and everywhere then sat at her IBM typewriter and typed away then cut and pasted photos and articles to develop a newsletter that was published every month. Since her passing, we, her family, have been fortunate to have found much of her collection of SACO (YACO) memorabilia and feel privileged to now share it with the community. We hope that many will be interested in learning more about the Slavic Cultures that contributed to making Watsonville a wonderfully diverse place to live.

We are missing past issues and hope others can help fill the void. If any you or someone you know have past issues or other written work of SACO (YACO) to share, please contact Susan Renison at the Watsonville Public Library at susan.renison@cityofwatsonville.org or call her at (831) 768-3400. We will keep the organization updated on the project.

Thank you!
GeriAnne Solano Simmons

A LITTLE BIT OF THIS AND THAT

REMINDER!

SACO'S ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**SATURDAY
JANUARY 26, 2019,
KNIGHTS OF
COLUMBUS HALL
11:00 AM**

**DON'T FORGET TO
VOTE AND THEN SEND
BACK YOUR BALLOT IN
THE PROVIDED RETURN
ENVELOPE**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE
TO SERVE AS AN
OFFICER IN THE
ORGANIZATION,
PLEASE MARK THE
BALLOT WHEN
RECEIVED**

**We can't continue
to grow without
your help**

THANK YOU!

ROOTS OF A BELOVED HOLIDAY TRADITION

by Elyse Biggs

At a recent SACO event I discovered plates of wonderfully spiraled slices of a dessert bread/cake, filled with a ground walnut filling. I couldn't believe my eyes—could it be potica/povitica? I snapped a few photos to share with my family, because I knew they would be envious of my good fortune. Later, I was introduced to a member from whom I hope to learn how to make this delicious treat.

Years ago, I would watch my grandmother every holiday season simmer the ground walnut-honey-cream filling over the stove, while she and several helpers would go to the dining room to stretch out the dough over a flour-covered sheet atop her massive dining room table. The family tradition passed to my Aunt, and unfortunately ended with her passing. Since then I have been on a quest to know all about this dessert and learn how to recreate it.

I was lucky to watch a recent showing of "Rick Steve's European Easter," where the origins of potica/povitica were discussed. At the end of winter and start of spring, the holiday Easter is the central Christian event that signifies renewal, birth and fertility. This cycle starts with Ash Wednesday followed by 40 days of Lent, which brought the final stretch of winter with no meat or eggs. The austerity of Lent ends with Holy Week; in the homeland Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are dedicated to Easter preparation—and one of the items featured in this effort is potica/povitica.

The bread is traditionally created in a circle, which is meant to represent the Jesus' crown of thorns, and is made in a ceramic bundt pan. It is covered with gauze, leaves and flowers, put in a basket that is adorned with an embroidered cloth for its journey to be blessed. The blessing with holy water typically takes place on Easter Saturday, just in time for its place on the Easter table as a special celebratory food.

Povitica/Potica means "to wrap in" which harkens to the traditional gauze wrapping. Other Central European countries also enjoy this treat: e.g., Serbia's orehnjaca; Hungary's beigli.

Now, the last step is to master the baking. I recently found I am not alone in this quest and I hope to make some new friends along the way.

15.7 Million Tourists Visit Croatia so far in 2018

by croatiaweek, September 6, 2018

From 1 January until 31 August 2018 a total of 15.7 million tourists visited Croatia, up 5% from the same period last year, the Croatian Tourist Board reported on Thursday. In the first eight months of this year, 88.5 million overnight stays were recorded in Croatia, which is 4% more than the same period last year, according to data from [eVisitor](#).

August was a busy month with 4.6 million arrivals, 3% more than last year and 32.1 million overnight stays, 1% more than in August 2017, which was a record year for Croatian tourism.

The busiest region when it came to tourist arrivals in August was Istria with 24 million overnight stays recorded. Split-Dalmatia was next (16.6 million), followed by Kvarner (16.2 million).

Away from the coast, Zagreb so far this year recorded 774,000 tourist arrivals, up 9% from last year, and 1.6 million overnight stays, 11% more than 2017.

Once again the Germans lead the way with 17 million overnight stays, followed by Slovenes (9.3 million), Austrians (6.3 million), Poles (5.6 million), and Czechs (4.8 million).

Rovinj, Dubrovnik, Poreč, Medulin and Split are the most popular destinations in 2018.

GIANTS' BUS TRIP REVIEW:

by Kerry Ruso Stringari

**Our 1st Giants' Bus Trip was a success!
It was great to relax and not have to
drive to AT&T Park. We arrived there
in plenty of time to enjoy the park and
to make it even better, the Giants won!
We will do this again
next year and plan on a
SACO & friends bus trip.
Hope you will join us.**



GO GIANTS :-)

LOST AND FOUND

**Child's Medium Hooded
Black Sweatshirt
Corralitos 4-H
Please call Maryann at
#(408) 828-5206**



All contributions are tax deductible with the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code Federal Tax I.D.#94-2885274

SLAVIC AMERICAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION
P.O. BOX 226
WATSONVILLE, CA 95077

A Non-Profit, Non-Religious & Non-Political Organization
Established in 1979

MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

members and the public are welcome!

The SACO Board of Directors currently meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Driscoll's Inc. office located on Westridge Drive, Building #300, Watsonville, CA from 7:00-9:00 PM.
We hope to see you there!

The Slavic American Cultural Organization is a non-profit corporation established in Watsonville in 1979 to bring together the Slavic community of the former Republics of Yugoslavia which are Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia for social and recreational purposes and to instill in the membership a pride in the cultural heritage, traditions and contributions of the Slavic Americans in Santa Cruz County. A large percentage of the local current and active members have a Croatian heritage.

**SACO Board of Directors
2018 & 2019**

President: Linda Pavlovich
linda.pavlovich@driscolls.com, (831)595-5898

Vice-President: Betty Bobeda
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Search for us on Facebook
at:
Slavic American Cultural Organization

SACO'S (formerly YACO's) HISTORY



Since 1979

YACO

10th Anniversary

1979 - 1989

1987

In addition to guest speakers and interesting programs, we held our ever popular traditional kupus and kobasica dinner on February 7, an enjoyable stew dinner on April 10, a potluck on June 5, our annual July picnic on the 5th, a barbequed chicken and macaroni dinner on August 2, and our Christmas party on December 6.

1988

This was a virtual duplication of the previous year with fantastic meals at reasonable prices, including: our Anniversary Dinner on February 7, a stew dinner on April 10, a potluck on June 5, the July picnic on the 3rd, a barbequed chicken dinner on September 4, and the Christmas party on December 4.

There was a major By-laws change in November, 1988. YACO was, and is, a very strong organization, but there is one major problem that we have always had in our club: getting people to volunteer to serve as officers. Each year at nomination time, we have spent considerable amounts of time trying to get new individuals to serve as officers. In attempting to remedy this situation, we amended the By-laws to provide for a five member Board of Trustees, elected by the membership at the annual meeting, who will either serve as officers or see to it that there are officers to fill each position. With this new rule in effect, a nominating committee is no longer necessary, and we are assured that YACO will have officers each year.